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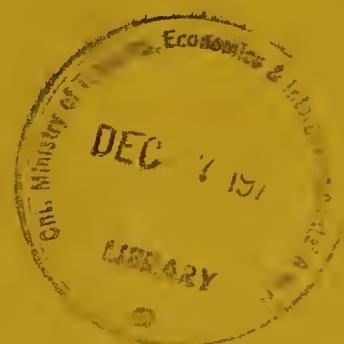
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DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT
PROSPECTS FOR THE GEORGIAN BAY REGION



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September 1972

PHASE I:

A report
on the issues,
conflicts and
trends that
should guide
citizens,
community leaders
and planners
in shaping
the region's
future.



SEPTEMBER, 1972

Ontario Ministry of Treasury, Economics
and Intergovernmental Affairs
H. I. Macdonald, Deputy Minister

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the considerable assistance it received in the preparation of this study, the staff of the Regional Development Branch is especially grateful to the people of the region, including the Georgian Bay Regional Development Council (particularly through its report, *Programme 572—Georgian Bay Regional Plan 1968-1972*), the Georgian Bay Regional Advisory Board, local elected representatives, industrial commissioners, tourist associations, representatives of planning agencies and manufacturing concerns. Other provincial government departments also provided valuable information and advice.

WHAT THIS REPORT HOPES TO ACCOMPLISH

The most important point to note about this booklet is this: although it deals with the question of how the Georgian Bay Region might best be developed, it is *not a plan* for the region's development.

Rather, it is an analysis intended to stimulate discussion about the future of the region, among the people who live and work there. It will be supported by a much longer, more technical paper resulting from two years of investigation and analysis. Copies of the technical paper will be available on request.

This booklet presents a brief picture of the issues, conflicts and trends in each of the region's three areas — the centre, the west and the north. Each area's present situation and future prospects are discussed in terms of its physical resources and its social and economic patterns.

Later in the booklet, various development concepts for the region as a whole are described and illustrated by maps. These concepts, as shown, could never be applied

in such "pure" or simplified form. However, they do illustrate alternate ways in which the region's growth could be shaped.

This is the seventh in a series of reports on regions in southern Ontario. Papers on the Niagara, Midwestern Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, St. Clair and Toronto-Centred regions have already appeared. An eighth report, on the Eastern Ontario Region, will be published shortly.

The Regional Development Branch hopes this report will provide a sound basis for the beginning of a long-term development plan, which in turn can serve as a guide for governments, businessmen, industrialists, developers and others whose decisions affect and shape the future of this area.

The aims of Ontario's program of regional development were set out in 1966, in a white paper called *Design for Development*. In it, the government announced that because economic growth and social development do not occur evenly throughout the province, a program was being initiated to guide, encourage and assist the orderly and rational development of the province's regions.

The basic aims of the program are to enhance the quality of life for the people of Ontario, to encourage private enterprise to prosper within a healthy and balanced community, to improve the effectiveness of provincial services in each region and to conserve our natural resources, including agricultural land, for the benefit of all the people of the province.

THE GEORGIAN BAY REGION IN PERSPECTIVE

The Georgian Bay Region extends from Lake Huron on the west to Lake Simcoe on the east, and north from there to the French River and Lake Nipissing. It is made up of the four counties of Bruce, Dufferin, Grey and Simcoe, plus the District Municipality of Muskoka and the District of Parry Sound.

In 1971, some 370,000 people were living within the region's 11,500 square miles. In 1966, about half the region's population was urban and half rural. Only four cities and towns — Barrie, Midland, Orillia and Owen Sound — in the region have populations of more than 10,000.

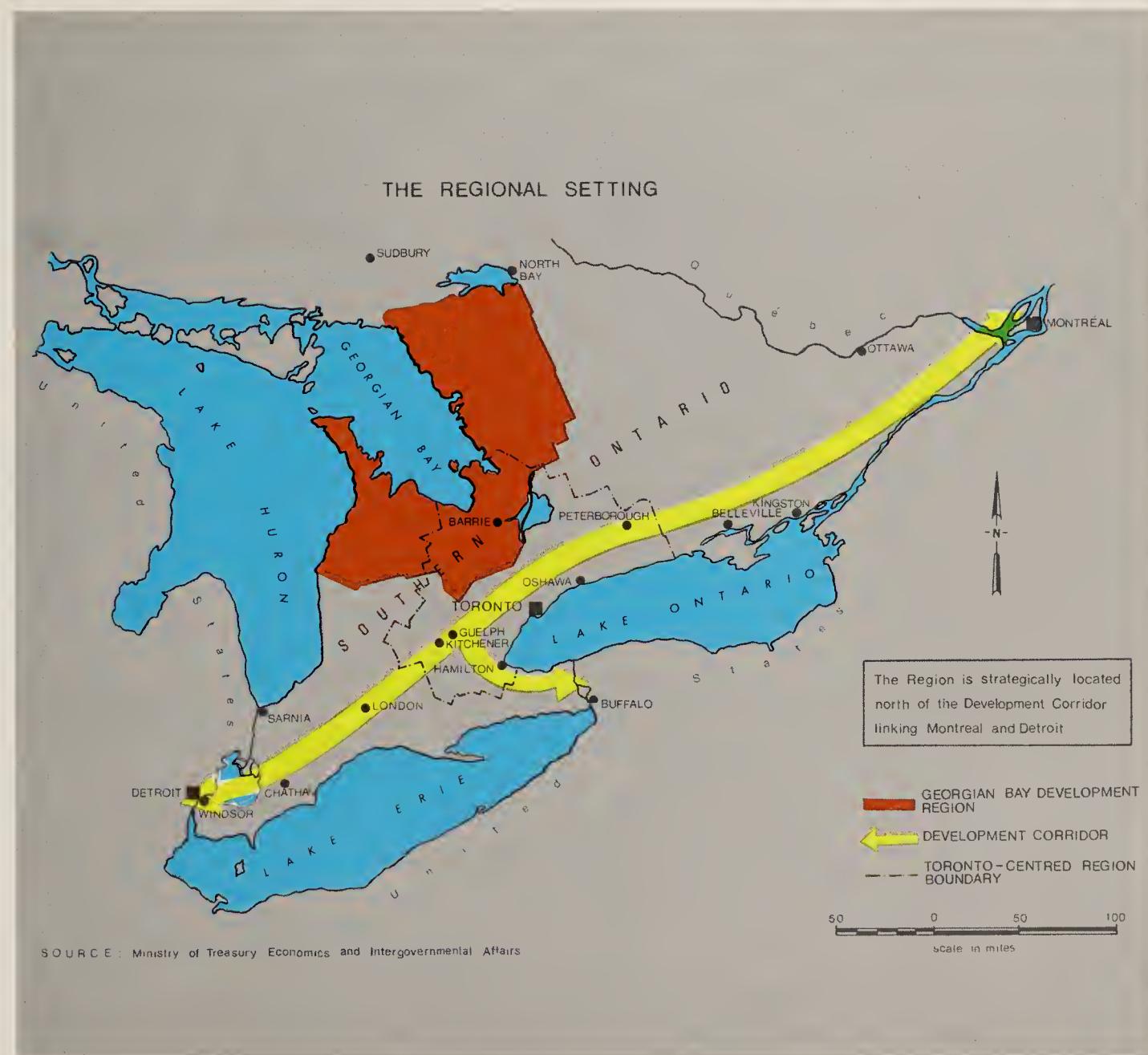
Its shape and characteristics are such that the region can readily be divided into three areas — the west (consisting of Bruce and Grey counties), the centre (Dufferin and Simcoe) and the north (Muskoka and Parry Sound).

THE SETTING OF THE REGION

The region lies to the north of the highly populated corridor centring on the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway, which links Toronto with Montreal to the east and Windsor to the southwest. However, the region's three areas do not all relate in the same way to the major communities of the corridor. Barrie, Orangeville and other communities in the centre of the region lie within easy reach of Metropolitan Toronto, by major highways, whereas parts of Parry Sound District are more than three hours' drive from Toronto. Even at that, the region's northern area is by no means an isolated "backwater", since the two main transportation routes from southern Ontario to northern Ontario and western Canada pass through Muskoka and Parry Sound.

The orientation of the region's west area is, again, quite different, with strong natural links, by highway, not only to Toronto but also to Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo and London.

"The region lies just north of the development corridor centring on the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway"





THE INFLUENCE OF THE TORONTO- CENTRED REGION

While it is easy to draw convenient boundaries around any geographical area and call it a "region", such lines seldom reflect all the realities of growth and development. For the Georgian Bay Region, one inescapable reality is the presence of the Toronto-Centred Region. For one thing, the two regions overlap. In any case, all parts of the Georgian Bay Region are bound to be influenced to some extent by what is happening in the rapidly growing cities of southern Ontario, especially Toronto. This influence is particularly pronounced in Dufferin and Simcoe counties, which lie within both regions. There the influence from the south is felt in at least three significant ways:

Commuters: People who have jobs in Toronto and are willing to travel long distances to work are buying houses in communities such as Barrie, Orangeville and Alliston. Conversely, some long-time residents in the southern part of the region have continued living there after accepting new jobs in Toronto. The two groups constitute a breed new to the region: the exurban commuter.

Recreation: In summer and winter, the Georgian Bay Region is an important playground for residents of southern Ontario, and much of the region's economic well-being depends on this relationship.

Market convenience: Manufacturers who need to be close to the Toronto market yet do not want to locate in a large city have found good locations in Barrie and Orangeville.

These trends were taken into account in two Ontario Government reports on the Toronto-Centred Region. The first, called *Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region*, appeared in May, 1970. A supplementary paper, *Design for Development: Status Report on the Toronto-Centred Region*, was issued in August, 1971. Both reports contained statements of intention that could have significant impact on the Georgian Bay Region:

- Cities and towns in the central and northern part of Simcoe County would be encouraged to grow, thereby providing jobs and a diverse way of life for people who might otherwise move to Toronto.
- Selected towns along the Toronto-Barrie highway route would be encouraged to grow as much as their water and sewage systems (existing and planned) would permit.
- Future urban growth would be concentrated in existing communities, leaving large areas northeast and northwest of Toronto reserved for agriculture, recreation, conservation and open space. In the Georgian Bay Region, this area includes the townships of Adjala, Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury and the communities of Alliston, Beeton, Bradford, Orangeville and Tottenham.
- As much as possible, the Georgian Bay shoreline, Lake Simcoe and the Niagara Escarpment would be maintained for conservation and recreation.

These intentions are worth keeping in mind as you read through the rest of this report and consider the prospects for the Georgian Bay Region.

They are also being taken into account by a task force the Ontario Government is sponsoring to provide advice specifically on development in Simcoe County, in the course of refining the Toronto-Centred Region concept. This task force has been asked to examine the area's capacity for growth, to suggest what this will mean for municipal government, and to indicate what kinds of industries can best achieve growth without harming the environment.



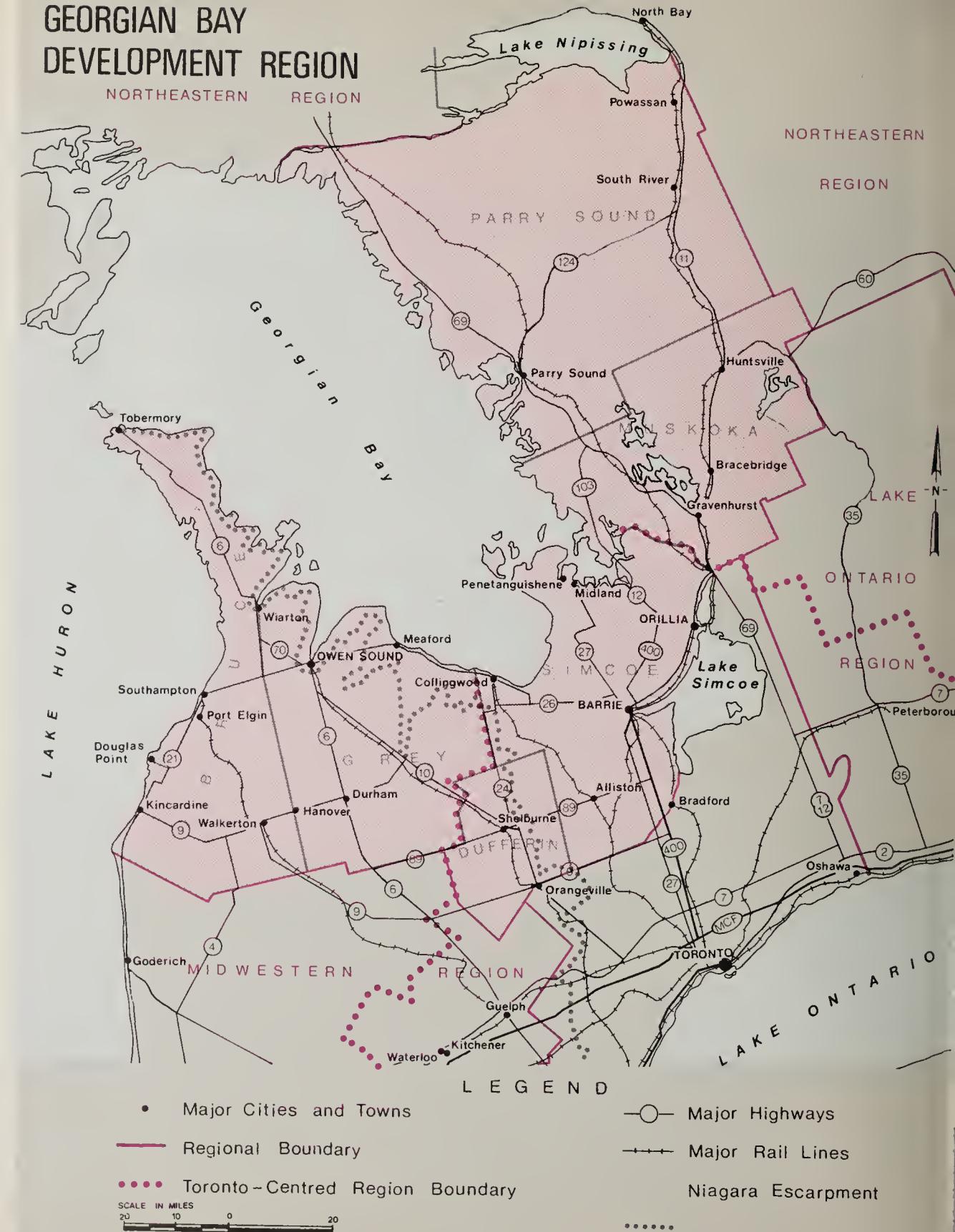
THE REGION TODAY—AND TOMORROW

Historically, the Georgian Bay Region has been a rural area dependent on agriculture, fishing and forestry. Outside the urban areas of the central part of the region there are still large rural areas, many of them healthy and productive farmland. Beef, dairying, poultry and hog-raising and potato-growing are among the important specialties.

In more recent times, manufacturing industries, notably metal fabricating and electrical products industries have become important.

The western and centre sectors produce timber, mostly for furniture manufacturers located within the region. The lumber industry, however, is not as healthy as it might be. Much of the timber is cut from small wood-lots that have been poorly managed in the past. In the north, lumbering and sawmilling, now of moderate importance, could prosper, given proper forest management.

Commercial fishing has dwindled to a point where it is no longer of economic significance to the region. (In 1970, there were only 85 commercial fishermen — mostly part-time.) Sport fishing, on the other hand, has become a major attraction and an important asset to tourism.



RECREATION

Lately, some disturbing trends have been taking place in the region's farming country. People who are not farmers have been buying farms for week-end recreational use and as long-term investments. Some of these new owners are not bothering to farm the land, or even to rent it to neighbouring farmers. Instead, they have allowed it to revert to weeds. This practice not only detracts from the appearance of the countryside but also presents problems to working farmers, as the weeds spread to their lands.

"Week-end farmers" — or, rather, *non-farmers* — also have an effect on land prices that is detrimental to established farmers. Having bought their land partly as an investment, some non-farmers and part-time farmers are happy, given the chance, to sell at a handsome profit to subdividers. And so potentially productive farmland disappears. Non-farmers, meanwhile, tend to bid up the price of land, making it hard for full-time farmers to expand their operations at reasonable cost.

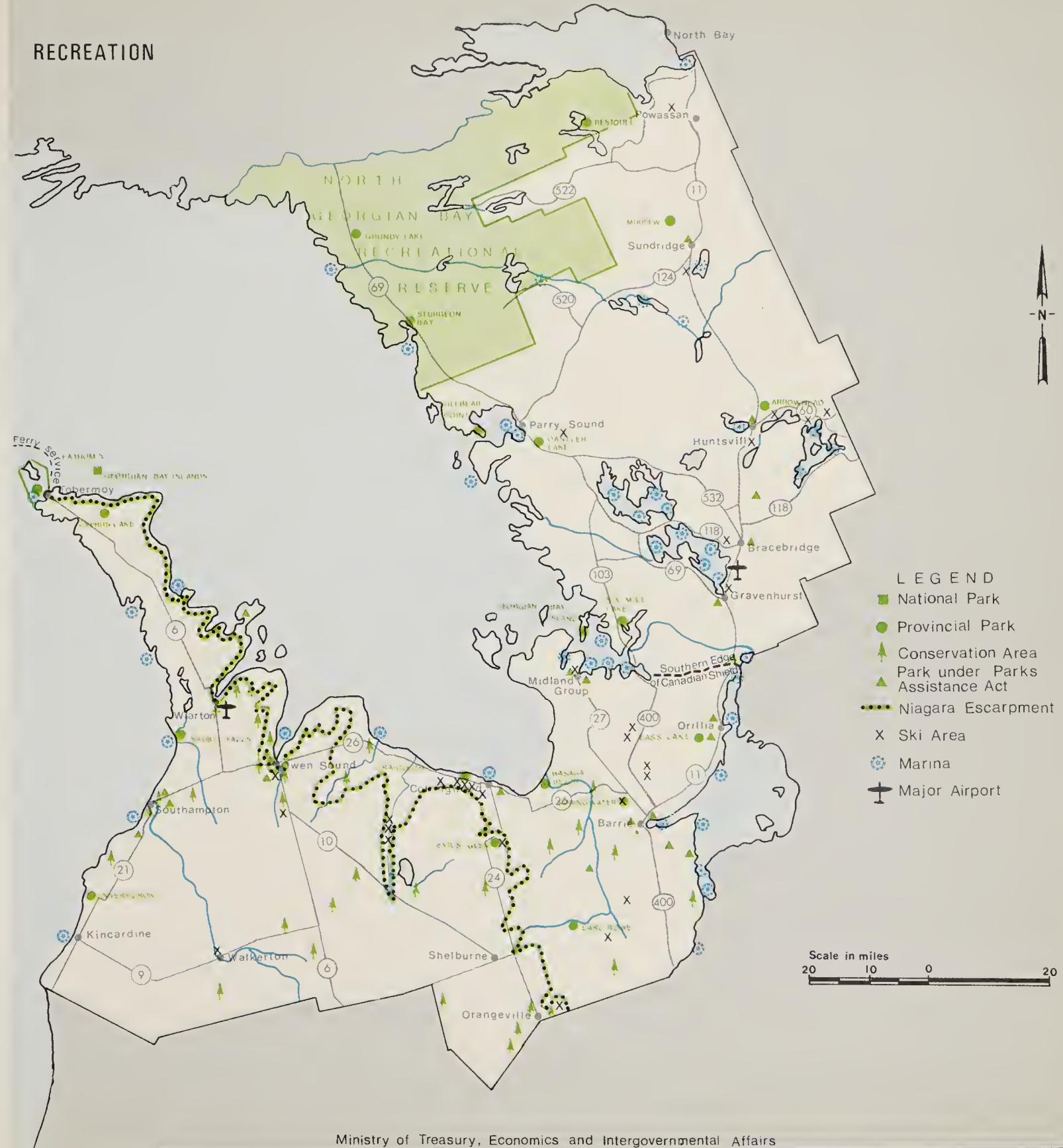
GOOD LIVING AND RECREATION

Much of the Georgian Bay Region has a pleasant rural atmosphere that is understandably valued by its residents, envied by city dwellers from inside and outside the region and a valuable asset to the tourism and recreation industries. Within the region's boundaries lie some of the most scenic spots in all Ontario. Among these are the Severn River, the shores of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron, 30,000 Islands, Muskoka Lakes, and sections of the Niagara Escarpment.

GOOD POTENTIAL

All in all, its assets are such that the region can be regarded as having a good potential — as long as development is carefully controlled and the natural environment, perhaps the greatest asset of all, is conserved and protected, especially against pollution.

Beyond this observation, however, it is difficult to generalize about the region as a whole. Each area — the centre, the west and the north — has experienced its own distinctive trends and offers its own distinctive prospects. Accordingly, these are described separately over the following pages.





SUB-REGIONAL AREAS

LEGEND

- County and District Boundaries
- Toronto-Centred Region Boundary
- Sub-Regional Area Boundary

Scale in miles
10 0 10 30

THE CENTRE AREA TODAY

Most of the region's growth and prosperity in recent years have occurred in the centre area (Dufferin and Simcoe counties), which has much of the region's manufacturing and more than half of its population.

Metal fabricating and electrical products industries, the area's two most important kinds of manufacturing, account for 43 per cent of all the workers employed in manufacturing in Dufferin County. Most of these are centred in Orangeville.

In Simcoe County, Barrie, Orillia and Midland have fairly diversified manufacturing bases. In Barrie and Midland, about 40 per cent of manufacturing workers are employed in metal fabricating or electrical products industries. In Orillia, nearly half work in machinery manufacturing or metal fabricating.

In recent years, the centre area has experienced faster growth in population than the other two areas. Since 1966, Dufferin County's population has increased by almost 25 per cent, Simcoe's by 15 per cent. Among the significant reasons:

Housing: Toronto's expensive houses and scarce land have prompted some people with jobs in Toronto to move out and commute from Alliston, Barrie, Orillville, Shelburne and other centre-area communities.

The Toronto market: Industries serving Toronto have been induced by provincial and federal grants and loans to locate in the region, chiefly in the centre area. By 1971, incentives could be credited with the establishment of new plants employing 2,400 workers in five centre-area communities — Collingwood, Midland, Orangeville, Penetanguishene and Tottenham. Even without incentives, some Toronto-oriented industries have lately been attracted to some centre-area communities, notably Barrie.

The lure of the country: A recent, separate trend has been created by people establishing permanent homes in rural locations, either renovating old houses or building new ones. Such urbanization of rural areas has become so popular that in the past five years some Simcoe County townships along Highway 400 have undergone population increases of more than 30 per cent. Meanwhile, increasing numbers of families are winterizing their summer cottages or building chalets for year-round use.

Both trends toward country living are pleasant for the families involved, but they create serious and costly problems for municipalities having to provide garbage collection, police and fire protection, school buses and other services over wide areas.

Urbanization of the countryside poses a serious threat to the region's natural environment, on which the tourism and recreation industries depend. Their decline could mean a drastic loss of income and jobs. In 1971, tourism brought \$45 million to \$50 million into Dufferin and Simcoe counties and \$110 million to \$125 million into the Georgian Bay Region as a whole.

In some cases at least, this form of urbanization could be curtailed or halted through better municipal planning and control.



THE CENTRE AREA'S PROSPECTS

The region's centre area can expect considerable urban growth in the future, partly as a result of the recommendations made in reports on the Toronto-Centred Region (TCR). The Ontario Government is counting on the TCR's Simcoe-Georgian Task Force to provide advice on how much growth will be appropriate for such communities as Barrie, Collingwood, Midland and Orillia.

In any case, other trends already noted are likely to mean continuing growth: exurban commuting to Toronto, the demand for homes and cottage sites in rural areas, winterization of cottages, and increased use of the area's recreational attractions, not only in summer but year round.

To cope successfully with this pressure while preserving the natural environment, the people of the region should consider these measures:

Controlling growth: Urban sprawl can be contained partly by reserving a wide area of open space for farming, recreation and conservation north of Toronto. Within this space, which includes the southern part of Simcoe County, urban growth would be contemplated only in centres able to provide basic municipal services at provincial standards. Providing the necessary open space is a job for both government and private business. One difficulty is that many potential park sites, now farms, are being sold as sites for cottages, chalets and houses.

Controlling cottage development: The proper spacing of cottages around lakes is necessary in order to avoid problems of waste disposal and pollution from septic tanks. Pipe sewage treatment systems are physically possible but not at costs acceptable to cottage owners and municipalities. Holding tanks, another alternative, can be a means of alle-

viating existing problems of sewage disposal — provided that treatment can be arranged for the hauled sewage.

It is important to maintain standards of cottage construction and design and to reserve some reasonable proportion of each lakeshore, where possible, for public use.

Improving accommodations: With the growth of tourism and recreation will come increased demands for accommodation in hotels, motels and some form of recreational complex. New facilities will have to be built, while some of the older, smaller ones need to be improved and expanded. Unfortunately, all such new spending is hampered by the high cost of borrowing money, especially long-term capital funds.

RECREATIONAL STUDIES

In anticipation of future needs, the Ontario Government has become involved in a series of recreational studies affecting various parts of the Georgian Bay Region. Three of these apply particularly to the centre area:

The Wasaga Park Community Project Study has prompted the Ontario Government to allocate substantial sums of money to develop the Wasaga Beach area for intensive recreational use.

The Canada-Ontario Rideau-Trent-Severn Waterway Study, a federal-provincial undertaking, has concentrated on two of the area's most important waterways. This report's recommendations are now under consideration by the two governments. Meanwhile, a follow-up study of Lake Simcoe is in progress. *The Niagara Escarpment Study*, released in 1969, recommends creation of a system of parks along the escarpment, with environmental control over a zone on either side of the escarpment crest. It also recommends maintaining the Bruce Trail as a continuous hiking route. This study has been accepted as Ontario Government policy, and a provincial task force is at work finding the best ways of implementing the recommendations.

THE FUTURE OF FARMING

Despite growth pressures, much of the central area of the region will retain its rural character. Specialized kinds of farming, such as vegetable growing in the Holland Marsh, have good prospects as long as they are not threatened by urban development.

THE MUNICIPAL PICTURE

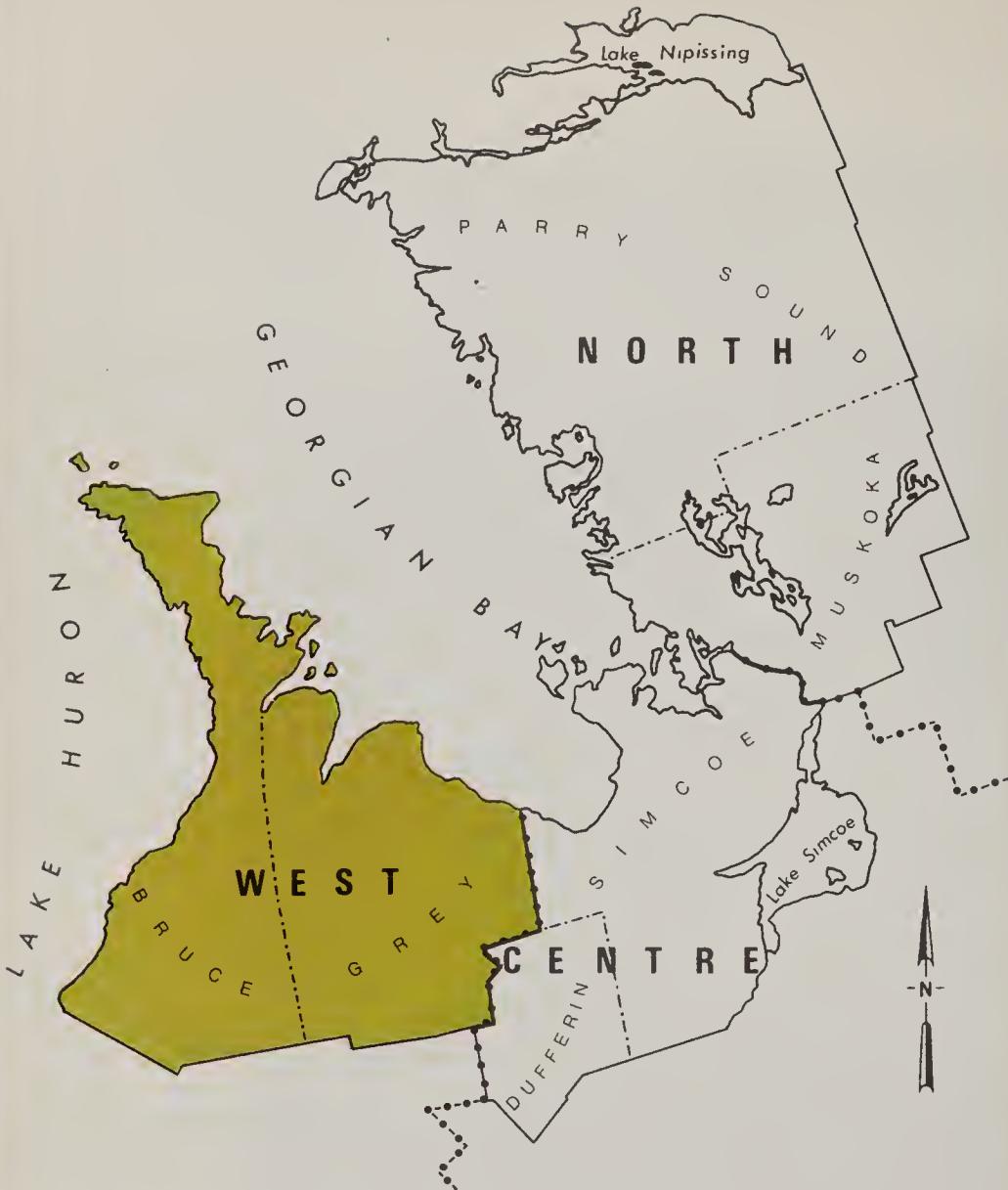
Two trends are evident among the centre area's municipalities:

1. Population movements and changes in life style are blurring traditional distinctions between urban and rural. This has important implications for municipalities, especially the many small ones.

2. Increasingly, municipalities are finding that their problems are similar to those of their neighbours and that it is necessary to work more closely together. For instance, joint planning is now being undertaken in four areas: Bradford and West Gwillimbury, Couchiching, Tiny-Tay Peninsula and Central Simcoe.







THE REGION'S WESTERN AREA TODAY

THE BACKGROUND

The two counties of Bruce and Grey contain about 110,000 people, or 31 per cent of the region's population. The largest community in the area, Owen Sound, began as a port but now has a variety of industries. Among them are manufacturers of television picture tubes, tools and dies, and steel tubes. It is the major shopping and service centre for the two counties. However, Owen Sound is not large enough to support such facilities as large department stores, elaborate professional and business services or a major hospital. For such services, residents of the two counties usually travel to Kitchener-Waterloo, London or Toronto.

Many towns and villages of the western area developed as service centres for farmers or as locations for small manufacturers, such as furniture makers. Today, the furniture industry is well established in Chesley, Durham, Hanover, Kincardine, Walkerton and other small communities. Processing of agricultural products is important to such communities as Tara, Thornbury and Teeswater.

POPULATION TRENDS

For half a century or more, until 1951, the area's population declined. Since then, it has been increasing slightly, and, over the past five years, this growth has been accelerating. Between 1966 and 1971, Bruce County increased by ten per cent to about 47,000, and Grey by six per cent to about 66,000.

Owen Sound's population has grown only slightly during the past five years, but its job opportunities have prompted people to settle in neighboring townships, which have consequently grown faster than Owen Sound itself.

THREE REASONS FOR GROWTH

Recent growth of the western area's popula-

tion can be attributed to these developments or trends:

Nuclear station: Since construction began on the Bruce Nuclear Power Centre in 1967, more than 4,000 workers and their families have moved into the area. Their presence has stimulated the local economy but has also caused housing problems in towns and villages around the site. One solution to the housing shortage has been the setting up of trailer parks, some of them remote from established communities.

This influx of construction and Hydro workers has led to considerable demands on municipalities to provide additional services such as water and sewage facilities to new subdivisions. In order to reduce the extra expense, Ontario Hydro has set up a grant program of \$1 million over ten years to assist municipalities.

Incentive grants: From 1964 to 1967, Owen Sound and the surrounding area were eligible for grants under the federal government's Area Development Agency incentive program. By 1971, firms attracted there by the incentives were employing nearly 900 people. Plant expansions, induced by federal and provincial incentives, have created an additional 2,300 jobs in the western part of the region. Unfortunately, the impact of incentives has been partly offset by the closure of several unsuccessful small plants.

Rural buildup: As in other parts of the region, the western area has experienced the growing tendency for city-oriented people to establish homes in rural locations. In the west, the favourite sites lie along the Niagara Escarpment and the shorelines of the Bruce Peninsula and Georgian Bay.

PROBLEMS OF URBANIZATION

Although the trend toward urbanization of the countryside is not yet as pronounced as it is in the centre area, it is causing problems:

Urban sprawl seems a likely result in the future because of the considerable numbers of land severances being granted to owners of large rural properties.

Unsightly strip development is beginning to occur along highways. Among these

are several dumps for abandoned cars. Ribbon development along highways is bad because it creates new hazards for motorists and slows through-traffic.

Part-time farmers are allowing some lands to revert to weeds.

The land between Collingwood and Thornbury, along the foot of Blue Mountain, is becoming covered with uncoordinated and, in some cases, unsightly chalet developments which detract from the area's scenic beauty.

In some of these chalet developments, clay soils are causing difficulties with waste disposal; in several instances surface ponding has occurred.

ASSETS AND PROBLEMS

Residents and visitors alike would be quick to agree that the greatest asset of the western area is its natural environment. The Niagara Escarpment, with its rugged cliffs, scenic valleys and enchanting waterfalls, dominates the Bruce Peninsula north to Tobermory. The Blue Mountain, the highest land feature in southern Ontario, offers some of the province's finest ski slopes. The Lake Huron and Georgian Bay shorelines contain sandy beaches, rocky headlands and lookout points with spectacular views.

TOURISM

In 1971, the area attracted more than two million visitors, who spent some \$28-30 million. Most of these visitors came from Kitchener-Waterloo, London and Toronto.

FARMING

Agriculture is a valuable economic asset to the western area, with large proportions of the rural parts of Grey and Bruce counties devoted to crops and cattle-raising. In fact, these two counties are considered to be the centre of Ontario's beef-raising industry. In south Bruce the soils are well suited to general agriculture. In the Beaver and Bighead valleys and along the shores of Georgian Bay between Collingwood and Meaford stand 3,000 acres of apple orchards. These are especially notable for their production of northern spy apples, perhaps the finest of these species in all Ontario.

Farming, however, is not without its serious problems. In large sectors of Grey and north Bruce the terrain is rugged, the soil is less fertile than elsewhere, and farming, consequently, is difficult. Abandoned farms are commonplace.

Farmers who specialize in raising livestock are faced with the dual problem of low cash income and high land prices. Many farmers who need to expand their holdings to improve productivity cannot afford the prices. Also, they find capital hard to come by.

FISHING

Once profitable commercially, fishing is now largely a sport — though, as such, it does attract visitors. The decline of commercial fishing can be attributed largely to the coming of the lamprey.

FORESTRY

As in other parts of the region, overcutting and poor management of woodlots have depressed the western area's lumber industry. One result is a supply problem for the furniture industry, the mainstay of several towns and villages.

NEED FOR SERVICES

Many of the western area's towns and villages lack services most people like to have close at hand — medical centres, lawyers' offices, a good variety of stores, schools, urban recreation and entertainment. For some people, these are an hour's drive — or further.

As the region's cities and towns grow, some of these facilities will likely be provided close at hand, but most will continue to be concentrated in Kitchener-Waterloo, London, Toronto and other communities outside the region.

PRESSURES ON LAND

As in the centre of the region, the western area will continue to experience heavy demand for homes in rural areas and for hobby farms. The winterization of summer cottages, unless checked, will continue creating additional servicing problems.

Such developments, unless controlled, pose a threat to the natural environment.

RECREATION

Demands for recreational space seem certain to continue, especially from people living in or near Kitchener-Waterloo and London. The Lake Huron shoreline is one of the few parts of the whole region that could still accommodate more recreational development, both public and private.

Cruising and sailing are popular on Lake Huron, but sailors complain about a shortage of suitable ports of refuge and marinas.

The ferry service between Tobermory and South Baymouth, on Manitoulin Island, offers an unusual voyage for the motoring tourist and makes it possible to travel a circle tour of the region. The present service, inadequate to meet the demand during the heavy part of the tourist season, will be greatly improved by 1974, when a new 110-car ferry will replace the two boats which now carry only 84 cars between them. Crossing time will be cut from three hours to two. Extensive renovations and new work will provide better parking, docks and other facilities.

To preserve and enhance the beautifully scenic stretch of the Niagara Escarpment

"Heavy demand for new homes and hobby farms will intensify pressure on rural land"

THE FUTURE OF THE WESTERN AREA

GROWTH AND INDUSTRY

If present trends continue, cities and towns in the western area will grow only slowly. Some small communities depend precariously for their existence on a single industry. Furniture-making, most notably, supports several towns, and yet with good-quality hardwood becoming scarce, some manufacturers may have to close down.

between Blue Mountain and Tobermory, ways must be found to prevent some of the land from passing into private hands for cottages, chalets and home sites. Such means are outlined in the Niagara Escarpment study mentioned earlier.

FORESTRY

The western area's ailing forest industry cannot be restored to good health quickly or easily, but sound forestry-management policies, including carefully regulated cutting, could eventually help produce better yields of hardwood.

LAND-USE PLANNING

Some promising beginnings have already been made toward preserving some land for public use and regulating development of other lands. Municipalities in Grey County have joined together to prepare an official plan for the Grey-Owen Sound Planning Area and for the Beaver Valley Planning Area. In Bruce County, joint planning areas have been established for the Bruce Peninsula, Saugeen and District, and east Bruce.

Discussions have been initiated by Bruce County to establish larger joint planning areas in the southern part of the county. Groups designated as planning areas are expected to play an important part in helping the provincial government preserve the Niagara Escarpment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Despite increases in population, only five of the 58 municipalities in the area have populations greater than 3,000. Small populations make it hard for communities to finance and maintain basic services, such as water and sewage facilities and police and fire protection. Area-wide planning is also difficult.

To develop strong municipal planning, extensive reorganization of the present local government system will probably be necessary.

THE NORTHERN AREA TODAY

In contrast with the centre and the west, where farms and woodlots predominate, the region's northern area is a land of rugged scenery, lakes and forests.

GROWTH AND INDUSTRY

Both the District Municipality of Muskoka and the organized parts of the District of Parry Sound have experienced population growth over the past five years, although the actual numbers of people involved are small.

In Muskoka, the growth of 15 per cent in permanent population since 1966, amounts to 4,200 people.

By 1971, new plants such as Alcan and Corning Glass in Bracebridge, Oliver-MacLeod in Gravenhurst and Kimberley-Clark in Huntsville — all attracted to the area by federal incentives — were employing about 675 people. Occupants of the district's 16,600 cottages constitute a significant seasonal population each summer.

In Parry Sound District, a seven per cent growth in population since 1966 amounts to only 1,900 people. Although the Town of Parry Sound appears to have had virtually no growth over the past ten years, growth has occurred in areas just outside the town. Other growth has taken place along shorelines and highways, especially in the area south of North Bay. (As the Phase I report for Northeastern Ontario points out, North Bay exerts a significant influence on the northern part of Parry Sound District.) There are approximately 7,600 seasonal residences in the district.

MANUFACTURING

In Parry Sound and Muskoka the wood and wood products industry is the most important manufacturing industry, employing 70 per cent of all manufacturing workers in Parry Sound and 36 per cent in Muskoka. The chemical industry employs most of the remainder in the Parry Sound District while in Muskoka, food and beverage plants and non-metallic mineral establishments account for most of the rest.

LUMBERING

Throughout both Muskoka and Parry Sound, many towns and villages were established as centres for the lumber industry, and many are still dependent on that industry. Although more than 80 per cent of the land area in Parry Sound and Muskoka is productive forest, lumbering and sawmilling operations are mostly small. Two exceptions are Nelson Wood Products in Gravenhurst and Weldwood in Huntsville.

TOURISM AND RECREATION

Tourism and recreation, growing in importance in Parry Sound, are already vital to Muskoka, which has been attracting summer visitors for almost a century. The recent boom in winter sports has meant a sudden growth of ski resorts, development of snowmobile trails and winterizing of cottages. In 1971, visitors, including cottagers, spent an estimated \$25-28 million in Muskoka; \$13-15 million in Parry Sound.

FARMING

The northern area's rocky terrain and shallow, infertile soils are severe limitations to farming. However, there are several dairy operations, a few beef operations, some market gardens and a small amount of cranberry growing.



FISHING

While sports fishing is important in the northern area, commercial fishing – as in the rest of the region – is a minor activity; it employed only 30 people in 1970.

THE FUTURE OF THE NORTHERN AREA

POPULATION TRENDS

For Bracebridge, Gravenhurst and Huntsville, the outlook is for moderate population growth in the immediate years ahead. In contrast, the Town of Parry Sound will not likely grow unless it can overcome certain disadvantages: location and terrain, lack of community facilities, small labour force.

Since Muskoka's development of cottages around lakes has virtually reached the saturation point, the demand for cottages is building up in the more-distant District of Parry Sound.

For permanent homes, many people will seek rural sites, especially beside lakes. This trend is already evident in strip developments where cottages are interspersed with permanent homes.

RECREATION

The demand for many types of recreation facilities in Muskoka and Parry Sound will continue to grow. The fastest demand growth will probably be in winter sports facilities – for downhill and cross-country skiers and for snowmobilers.

"In contrast with the other two, the northern area is a land of rugged scenery"

Summer cruising could become a big attraction around the 30,000 Islands, if improvements are made in some of the existing facilities and new docks, parks, marinas and pump-out stations are built in the more isolated sections of the area.

The recreational picture in the northern area is almost certain to be significantly affected by two Ontario Government studies. One, already released, concerns the *North Georgian Bay Recreational Reserve*, situated partly in the Parry Sound District. This reserve is mostly crown land and the study describes a variety of uses for various parts of it — ranging from untouched wilderness to cottage development.

A second study, on the future of logging in Algonquin Park, will have implications for Muskoka and Parry Sound.

TRANSPORTATION PATTERNS

Improvements in existing highways and construction of some new ones can be expected to have favourable effects on communities in Muskoka and Parry Sound. A limited-access highway around the east side of Lake Simcoe may be necessary to meet a growing demand. Meanwhile, Muskoka and Parry Sound will benefit from improvements to highways linking them to cities and towns to the south, especially Highways 103 and 69.

FARMING, FORESTRY, FISHING

Prospects for farming in the northern area are extremely limited.

With many old farms abandoned, timber

production offers more promise here than in the centre of western parts of the region. Although most existing lumbering operations are too small to be economical, some consolidation seems likely.

Commercial fishing faces the same difficulties as in the centre and the west.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A major move toward more effective local government was made in January 1971, with the establishment of the District Municipality of Muskoka, which consolidated 25 municipalities into six. It is an important experiment in a new form of government for a recreational and rural area. Its planning program, developed in co-operation with the Ontario Government, should have great significance for the trends in the northern area of the region.

The District of Parry Sound is meanwhile in the early stages of preparing a district planning program for its 27 organized municipalities and 28 unorganized townships, all but one of which (the Town of Parry Sound) have populations of fewer than 3,000. One joint planning area has already been established by the Town of Parry Sound and the neighbouring townships of Foley and McDougall.

A review of amalgamation proposals concerning the Town of Parry Sound and its surrounding area is presently being conducted by the Ontario Municipal Board, but no decisions are expected until later this year.



"WHAT KIND OF REGION DO WE WANT?"

Regional development goals are concerned with the most basic question the people of any region can ask: "What kind of region do we want?"

Their answer, of course, depends on their needs and desires, and so these must determine what goals are set.

Setting the right goals is difficult, however, because they have to satisfy many different requirements at once. Provincial and regional authorities, for instance, usually see regional development in quite different terms, yet the goals they seek must satisfy both. And there is a difference as well between *provincial* goals for regional development and *regional* goals.

Provincial goals are goals formulated to help meet objectives that apply to all regions throughout the province. A regional goal is a goal set to help solve a problem (or several problems) that may exist only in that one region.

The Ontario Government's basic policies for regional development, first spelled out in the 1966 White Paper, Design for Development, can be summed up this way:

1. The government recognizes that private enterprise is vital to the provincial economy. The government intends to keep assessing the contribution of the private sector to see how it matches the needs and resources of the province. The government will develop policies to encourage the private sector to grow in a desirable and rational way.
2. The government wants to help develop in each region a social and economic climate in which people, as individuals, can use their capabilities to the fullest.
3. Policies should be adopted to encourage development of natural resources while conserving the aesthetic qualities of the environment.

4. The government should plan and carry out its spending in such a way as to benefit the regions, as well as the province as a whole, as much as possible.

5. The regional development program must be a working partnership between the people and the government. (The actual wording of these principles as endorsed by the Cabinet is in the panel to the right.)

As a major step toward implementing these policies, the government has introduced more stringent land-use controls limiting urban development in rural areas.

Provincial principles are important to regional development for two reasons:

First, because the province is made up of regional units, provincial goals must be realized at the regional level.

Second, provincial goals in effect embody goals for regional development. These ensure that when an individual region adopts goals of its own, they will be compatible with the goals set for the province as a whole.

"Provincial goals and regional goals are not always the same—yet both should be satisfied"

CABINET ENUNCIATION OF PROVINCIAL GOALS

Here is the way the provincial Cabinet has expressed its fundamental policies affecting regional development:

1. That the vital role of the private sector be recognized, that its contribution to the provincial economy be continually assessed in view of provincial needs and resources, and that provincial policies be found to encourage a rational expansion of the private sector.
2. That individuals be encouraged to develop their full capabilities through provision of a climate of expanding social and economic opportunities for each region.
3. That regional and resource policies encourage adequate development of the natural environment while conserving the aesthetic qualities of that environment.
4. That the timing and impact of Ontario's large and expanding expenditures be planned and co-ordinated effectively to fulfill, in an orderly way, the needs of the regions in the province as well as of the province itself.
5. That this be a program for regional development which must necessarily involve a working partnership between all of the people of Ontario and government.

HOW DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES PRODUCE DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF GROWTH

In any attempt to direct or shape the future growth of any region, many different techniques or approaches are possible.

This booklet does not presume to suggest which course the people of the Georgian Bay Region should choose.

Instead, over the next several pages, it discusses the way present trends are shaping the region and then it goes on to discuss and illustrate three widely differing techniques which, in theory at least, could be applied to alter the region's future shape. There are, of course, many other options and variations that could be considered, and people concerned about the region's future should not consider themselves restricted to the techniques illustrated here.

All the approaches shown here are compatible with the Toronto-Centred Region concept, which, realistically, must serve as a starting point for any development policy adopted for Dufferin and Simcoe counties.

HOW PRESENT TRENDS WOULD SHAPE THE REGION

This illustration is presented here simply to provide a yardstick against which to compare other approaches outlined on the pages that follow.

Even if no alternatives were adopted within the region, the trends depicted here could not be expected to continue because some measures set out for the Toronto-Centred Region and other areas will soon begin to have an important impact on the Georgian Bay Region. These include the Niagara Escarpment Task Force recommendations, the Canada-Ontario Rideau-Trent-Severn Study, and the studies on Algonquin Park and Wasaga Beach.

The map shown here does not take those measures into account. Rather, it shows what would have happened — or, rather, would have continued to happen — to communities of 1,000 population or larger if the present trends continued into the future. (This does not mean that smaller communities are being left out of planning considerations; but for simplicity's sake, only the larger communities are charted here.)

As the map shows, most population growth would take place in the cities and towns of the region's centre area, especially Barrie, Midland, Orangeville and Orillia. Growth in the west and north would be moderate. (One anomaly is the area around Douglas Point, where the population is (and will be) temporarily inflated throughout construction of the Bruce Nuclear Power Centre.)

Low-density urban sprawl would continue to creep into the rural countryside, especially the scenic areas and the areas closest to Toronto and other large urban centres. The trend toward winterized cottages would increase, aggravating problems in municipal services and development.

This concept also presumes that no radical changes would be made in present planning legislation and that in the immediate years ahead no new regional governments would be established.

TRENDS



"If present trends continued, most of the population growth would occur in the centre area's cities and towns"

EXAMPLE I:

CONCENTRATING DEVELOPMENT IN THE CENTRE OF THE REGION

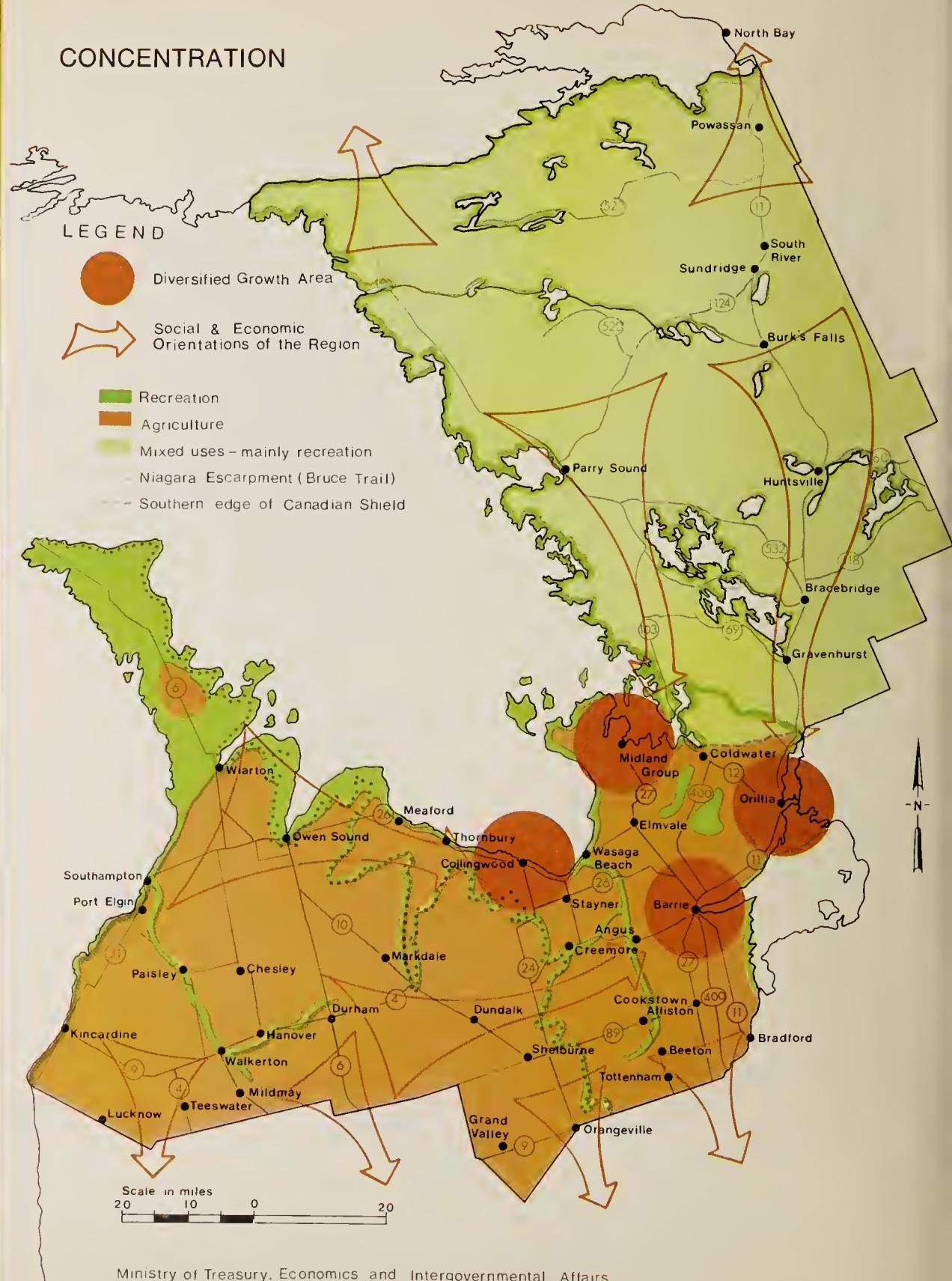
With this approach, regulations of various kinds, such as land-use controls and incentive programs, would be used to concentrate new growth in north Simcoe, especially Barrie, Collingwood, Midland and Orillia. These centres would be closely linked to each other, would have a wide range of job opportunities and would offer a common labour pool to industry.

This approach directly reflects the Toronto-Centred Region concept, which envisages growth being stimulated in north Simcoe.

The northern and western parts of the region would experience only slow growth and would remain largely rural and recreational. Their larger communities would be rural service centres with tourist facilities but would have very little manufacturing.

The region's fringes would be strongly tied to the centre area and to cities and towns outside the region.

CONCENTRATION



EXAMPLE II:

CONCENTRATING DEVELOPMENT IN SEVERAL LARGE CENTRES

This approach calls for more moderate growth in north Simcoe than in Example 1, plus stimulation of growth in Owen Sound and Bracebridge-Gravenhurst. It accepts the growth concept of the Toronto-Centred Region, but opts for spreading the results more widely than in Example 1.

Owen Sound would be the major centre for the western area of the region. It would provide a wider range of services than it now does, and a greater choice of opportunities, particularly for people from the surrounding rural areas.

Bracebridge-Gravenhurst would perform a similar role for Muskoka and Parry Sound districts. The northern area of Parry Sound District would continue to look to Sudbury and North Bay.

With Owen Sound and Bracebridge-Gravenhurst serving as the major communities of the western and northern areas respectively, transportation routes within the region would focus on them.

SELECTED CENTRES



EXAMPLE III:

DISPERSING DEVELOPMENT INTO MANY SMALL CENTRES

This approach would spread development through many more places than Examples I or II would do. It is different from allowing present trends to continue because it would involve helping certain communities to develop more job opportunities, more social facilities and a wider choice of life style than they now offer.

This map shows two kinds of growth centres that could be developed with this approach. One kind (solid circles) is the diversified growth centre — that is, a community with a wider variety of industries than it now has, plus a full range of tourist facilities.

The other kind of growth centre (hollow circles) would be the specialized community where, rather than trying to attract industry of all kinds, the town would specialize in what it could do best. For instance, Wasaga Beach might specialize as a tourist resort and Durham as an agricultural service centre.

DISPERSION



SOME QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU DECIDE THE BEST APPROACH FOR YOUR REGION

The overall prospects for the development of the Georgian Bay Region are generally favourable. Results, however, are what count, and the best results will be achieved only if the most satisfactory answers are found to a broad range of questions that arise when various possibilities are considered.

Allowing present trends to continue will not remedy or solve many of the issues and conflicts outlined in this report. In many cases, postponement of action will simply aggravate problems, making them more difficult and expensive to solve at some later time.

As the Ontario Government sees the region, there are four basic concerns about which key questions must be asked and answered. These have to do with urban growth, recreational and resort areas, rural life and local government. These key questions, in turn, give rise to dozens of other related questions, some of which are raised below.

The key questions:

- 1. Where should future urban growth take place and how should it be accommodated?*

This question will become increasingly important as plans for the Toronto-Centred Region are implemented and growth from the south is directed into the cities and towns of north Simcoe.

Concentrating growth in a selected number of cities and towns has many advantages. A city or large town can provide a wider range of social services and facilities than a small town can afford to support. Concentration of manufacturing brings in larger firms, strong labour pools and integrated activities (in which, for instance, manufacturer A serves as a close-at-hand supplier to manufacturer B).

With concentration, municipal services, such as water and sewerage, can be supplied at a lower cost. The same cost principle applies to schools, hospitals and other necessary or desirable services.

But like any other "solution" this one raises its own questions: How much growth could be absorbed by, say, Barrie, Collingwood, Midland, Orillia or some combination? (This question is a major concern of the task force now studying the centre area.)

If Barrie grows considerably, what would discharge of its treated waste do to the ecology of Lake Simcoe? Similarly, what would growth in Orillia do to Lake Couchiching? If those lakes are affected, what will be the effect on tourism and recreation?

If Barrie, Orillia, Collingwood and Midland are all encouraged to grow, what should their target populations be for a given date? What functional role should each of those communities be assigned?

If growth is encouraged generally throughout north Simcoe, would it draw population away from the other areas? If so, would they suffer as a result?

How important is it for communities in the western and northern areas to share new growth with the towns and cities of north Simcoe? Is it realistic to eliminate Bracebridge-Gravenhurst as a candidate for concentrated growth if a new highway is to be built around the east side of Lake Simcoe? Would not those communities grow in importance and size anyway by virtue of their

lying along a major route to northern Ontario.

Dispersing growth throughout many communities of the region would help preserve the present way of life, bringing the least possible change to cities, towns and villages and causing minimum disturbance to the landscape. Agriculture, as a major employer in the rural areas, would continue pretty much as now. The family farm would have a better chance of surviving.

But a dispersed population is difficult and expensive to service. This is especially so if the environment is to be preserved, for this would mean providing adequate waste disposal facilities for every community and every rural home. Such costs are particularly high in Muskoka and Parry Sound, where the soil is typically shallow. Is this approach worth the price?

If growth is to be dispersed throughout many communities, what happens to manufacturing? Can its growth be dispersed too?

(Economic growth, of course, doesn't necessarily depend on attracting new manufacturers. Tourism can also provide growth, through new services to visitors — hotels, resorts, convention centres, marinas and so on.)

How much help can the government provide by locating its own institutions in selected communities (or in persuading others to do so)? Should new government offices, hospitals, colleges and other institutions be located according to the region's economic needs (locations which may not coincide with the sites that might otherwise be chosen)?

What kind of transportation system should be designed to serve the region's future needs?

- 2. What should be the future of the resort and recreation areas?*

Any alternative considered for the region's future must take into account the preservation of its most valuable asset — the

natural environment. How much more of the demand for cottages, ski slopes, chalets and snowmobile trails can the region meet without despoiling the environment? How much of the land which now seems destined for private use should be reserved for public enjoyment? What regulations are needed and where should they be applied?

How can the public be assured access to lakeshores?

Should future cottage developments be compelled to meet certain design standards — such as minimum setbacks from lake fronts, or groupings that require several cottages to use as little lake front as possible?

What should be done, if anything, to prevent cottages from becoming permanent homes, at least in areas where they would cause problems for municipalities?

What forms of transportation will be needed to enable large numbers of people to visit the region on week-ends and holidays? What new ways can be devised to provide easy access to the region's many tourist attractions? Are new kinds of transportation, such as air-cushion vehicles, likely to be better alternatives than private autos? Should the proposed transportation route around the east side of Lake Simcoe be something other than a highway? Are there other possible transportation routes to be considered?

Will changes in working hours and shortening of the work week help alleviate some of the present highway congestion?

Even more basically, how much should the region rely on tourism to provide a desirable degree of growth and development?

What new developments are most needed at existing commercial resorts? What new kinds of resorts should be developed — recreational complexes, conference centres?

What sorts of new man-made attractions

and recreational events should be developed or planned?

3. What should be the future of the region's rural areas?

The basic question here is whether the present trend in population movement — the departure of residents from the rural areas, notably Bruce County and the District of Parry Sound — should continue, or whether it is possible and desirable to slow down this migration by providing more jobs in these areas. To what extent can the region's traditional occupations — agriculture, fishing and forestry — provide a reasonable standard of living for those who prefer this kind of work? Can the job opportunities in these occupations be increased? If so, how?

With the growing numbers of city-oriented people moving into the rural areas, how can we prevent additional urban sprawl? Is present planning legislation adequate to halt urban sprawl, or are stronger controls needed?

4. What form of local government is needed?

The degree of success achieved by the new District Municipality of Muskoka will help provide the answer to this question. But not the whole answer. Each configuration of growth may well require a different system of local government.

Concentrating growth in large towns and cities would call for some form of local government which would allow both urban and rural areas to enjoy the benefits of such growth. On the other hand, dispersing growth throughout many communities might not require changes in municipal jurisdiction but would certainly call for increased co-operation and sharing of resources among many municipalities, even if they found no need for a common tax base. Should a form of regional government be encouraged in this area?

HOW YOU CAN PLAY A PART

This report reviews the development patterns that have evolved in the Georgian Bay Region. It discusses the region's prospects and identifies issues that must be faced. It categorizes the problems broadly as they relate to urbanization, tourism and recreation (particularly as they affect the environment), the changing character of the rural scene, and the need to examine alternatives for local government.

It offers some examples of various development patterns that could be encouraged, and it raises some of the many questions that must be asked and answered if the region is to develop a satisfying and workable plan.

You will not find any pat solutions or final answers in this booklet. What you find here is the Ontario Government's way of encouraging the people of the Georgian Bay Region to think seriously about the future and help search for the answer to the most fundamental question of all: "What kind of region do we want?"

Soon after this report is issued, a series of public meetings will be held to discuss the contents and give everyone who is interested a chance to react.

Briefs and other submissions are also invited, for they can be most useful in helping to create a plan that truly reflects the wishes of the people.

No regional plan stands much chance of success without solid effort at all levels of government, plus a full, frank and thoughtful expression of views from municipal organizations, other public groups, businessmen, industrial leaders, farmers and other citizens.

Only with your help and participation can this program provide the guidance and controls to enable your community to cope with — and benefit from — the changes that lie ahead.

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Ontario. Regional Development E
Design for development :
prospects for the Georgian Bay :
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Date Due

You are invited to send your suggestions
and comments on this report to:

The Treasurer of Ontario,
Queen's Park,
Toronto 5, Ontario.



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